

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro, Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

I am requesting funding for Shepherd Center Adaptive Driving Program in fiscal year 2023. The entity to receive funding for this project is the Shepherd Center, located at 2020 Peachtree Road NW Atlanta, GA 30309.


The adaptive driving program at Shepherd Center provides driving evaluations, training, and education to people with disabilities. The Center provides services to clients with injuries and illnesses including spinal cord injuries, brain injuries, multiple sclerosis, dementia, stroke, orthopedic issues, and many more. During the evaluation process, they assess client's visual, physical, and cognitive abilities in the clinic. Then, they complete an on-road assessment that allows clients the opportunity to drive on the road with a trained evaluator in an adaptive vehicle and with equipment if needed. The Shepherd Center needs funding to purchase updated equipment and vehicles to allow Occupational Therapists/ Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialists to complete comprehensive driving evaluations and training for clients with disabilities. This will include purchasing equipment for testing clients' vision and cognition to determine if they are safe to drive. It will also include the purchase of accessible/modified vehicles that will allow the Center to train these clients with disabilities. Currently, their evaluation equipment is outdated. Also, their vehicle fleet includes vehicles that are as old as 19 years old and they lack the current safety features that current vehicle have today.

The majority of Shepherd Center patients have lost their independence as well as lost their ability to work and provide for themselves and their family. Depending on their recovery, some clients are able to return to driving but require the Shepherd Center's services to be evaluated and trained to use the proper equipment and techniques to drive.

This project is a good use of taxpayer dollars because it will improve safety of drivers on the road, allow clients to have independence, return to work, and contribute to the community.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nikema Williams', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nikema Williams
Member of Congress